United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General travels to Europe for talks with French and British leaders on Yugoslavia, Cambodia and on forthcoming summit of Security Council, among other things.

- Secretary-General appoints Yasushi Akashi his Special Representative on Cambodia, effective today.

- Secretary-General says cease-fire in Mogadiscio is of "vital importance" for distribution of urgently needed humanitarian assistance.

- United Nations military liaison officers in Yugoslavia to be deployed in headquarters of Yugoslav National Army headquarters and Croatian People's Guard, according to further report by Secretary-General.

- Assistant Secretary-General Kofi Annan reports "progress" in talks in Vienna between United Nations representatives and Iraqi authorities on possible resumption of petroleum exports by Iraq.

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A United Nations spokeswoman announced today that Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was on his way to Europe on a working visit to France and the United Kingdom where he would discuss with leaders of those countries a wide range of issues including Yugoslavia, Cambodia and the forthcoming summit of the Security Council.

In Paris, from 9 to 11 January, the Secretary-General was scheduled to meet with French President François Mitterrand and Foreign Minister Roland Dumas as well as with other French officials.

He would then travel to London for meetings on 12 and 13 January with British Prime Minister John Major, Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd and other British officials as well as with Lord Carrington, the European Community's mediator on Yugoslavia.

The Secretary-General is expected back in New York on Tuesday, 14 January.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appointed Under-Secretary-General Yasushi Akashi as his Special Representative on Cambodia, effective today.

Mr. Akashi has served as United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs since March 1987, prior to which he had been Under-Secretary-General for Public Information from May 1979. Before joining the Organization, he was Ambassador at the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations.

Mr. Akashi joined the United Nations Secretariat in 1957 and performed various functions in the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, the Office of Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs and Coordination where he was a principal officer.

The former Under-Secretary-General served his Government as Representative to the General Assembly from 1974 to 1978 as well as to a number of United Nations conferences and subsidiary organs.

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The Secretary-General today called for an immediate cease-fire in Mogadiscio stating that the continuing fighting was "seriously impeding" United Nations efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance to all the affected people of Somalia.

According to a statement issued at Headquarters, attributed to a spokeswoman for Mr. Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General had received a preliminary report of his envoy to Somalia, Under-Secretary-General James O.C. Jonah. It was "evident" to Mr. Boutros-Ghali that the situation remained "tragic and volatile", and that the political and economic problems facing Somalia continued to deteriorate in the face of widespread insecurity.

The Secretary-General had been informed that there was "overwhelming support" for an immediate cease-fire in Mogadiscio from most of the parties and factions in Somalia, "except for the ambiguous position maintained by one of the chief protagonists to the conflict".

The United Nations would continue to do its utmost to provide humanitarian assistance for the people of Somalia and to press for a lasting cease-fire in Mogadiscio, the statement said.

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The cost associated with the emplacement and maintenance of the 50 United Nations military liaison officers to be sent to Yugoslavia would be approximately $2 million for the first month and about $0.7 million monthly thereafter, according to a further report by Secretary-General.

In his report to the Security Council, dated 7 January, the Secretary-General said the liaison officers would be deployed in each of the existing locations of the Yugoslav Federal Army and the Croatian People's Guard. Their main responsibilities would be to use their good offices to promote maintenance of the cease-fire by facilitating communication between the two groups and by helping them to resolve differences that may arise (document S/23363/Add.1).

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Talks between United Nations representatives and Iraqi authorities on the possible resumption of petroleum exports by Iraq continued today in Vienna.

At a press conference in the Austrian capital today, Assistant Secretary-General Kofi Annan, United Nations Controller, told correspondents that the current talks were the first "serious" meeting with the Iraqis since the Security Council, concerned at the plight of the Iraqi population, approved a "scheme" for meeting their humanitarian needs.

Discussions had focused on possible investments, cost of production, oil products, outlets to be used for export and marketing, among other things. The atmosphere had been "very good, very constructive and very positive" and talks were still continuing, Mr. Annan said.

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